

A day to remember those who serve

Aug. 31, 1949, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under one department — the Department of Defense. Each of the military leagues and orders was asked to drop sponsorship of its specific service day in order to celebrate the newly announced Armed Forces Day. The Army, Navy and Air Force leagues adopted the newly formed day. The Marine Corps League declined to drop support for Marine Corps Day but supports Armed Forces Day, too.

In a speech announcing the formation of the day, President Truman praised the work of the military services at home and abroad and said, "It is vital to the security of the nation and to the establishment of a desirable peace." In an excerpt from the Presidential Proclamation of Feb. 27, 1950, Mr. Truman stated:

"Now, therefore, I, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim that Saturday, May 20, 1950, shall be known as Armed Forces Day; and I invite the Governors of the States, Territories, and possessions to issue proclamations calling for the celebration of that day in such manner as to honor the Armed Forces of the United States and the millions of veterans who have returned to civilian pursuits."

Celebrating Armed Forces Day always has served several purposes. From its inception almost 50 years ago, it has

served as an opportunity for civilians to learn more about the armed forces' mission in promoting national security. It also was designed to increase public understanding of the role of the military in a democratic society. It is a day for the military to show off its state-of-the-art equipment. And, most importantly, it was a day to honor and acknowledge the people of the Armed Forces of the United States.

The theme of the first Armed Forces Day, "Teamed for Defense," was chosen to emphasize the unification of all the military forces under a single department of the government. It was celebrated with parades, open houses, receptions, and air shows. In

Washington D.C., 10,000 troops from all branches of the military, cadets, and veterans marched past the President and his party. In Berlin, 1,000 U.S. troops paraded for the German citizens at Tempelhof Airfield. In New York City, an estimated 33,000 people participated in Armed Forces Day as 250 military planes of all types flew overhead. The famous mothballed "battlewagons" of World War II, the Missouri, the New Jersey, the North Carolina, and the Iowa, were all open for public inspection at harbors across the country. Precision flying teams dominated the skies as tracking radar were exhibited on the ground. All across the country, the American people joined together to honor the Armed Forces.

As the people gathered to honor the Armed Forces on this occasion, so too did the country's leaders. Some of their statements on the occasion of past Armed Forces Days follow.

Armed Forces Day is celebrated annually on the third Saturday of May. Armed Forces Week begins on the second Saturday of May and ends on the third Sunday of May, the day after Armed Forces Day. Because of their unique training schedules, National Guard and Reserve units may celebrate Armed Forces Day/Week over any period in May.

Armed Forces Day picnic

The Liberty Club sponsors an Armed Forces Day Social Hour Picnic from 5 - 8 p.m. today. The event is free to club members and \$3 for eligible non-members. For details, call Ext. 3869.

They said it . . .

"Armed Forces Day this year should serve to emphasize the practical application of unification in action, and to remind us of the continued need for unity in our Armed Forces and among all of our citizens in the interests of security and peace."

*Hon. Robert D. Lovett
Former Secretary of Defense*

"...Word to the Nation: Guard zealously your right to serve in the Armed Forces, for without them, there will be no other rights to guard."

President John F. Kennedy

On the cover

SrA. Regina Wilson, 48th Security Police Squadron, and Sgt. 1st Class (P) David Serface, Ground Liaison Team, represent part of the armed forces team at RAF Lakenheath.

Short-lived Air Force Day increased awareness

Air Force Day was established Aug. 1, 1947, by President Harry S. Truman "in recognition of the personnel of the victorious Army Air Forces and all those who have developed and maintained our nation's air strength."

Aug. 1 was chosen to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment, in 1907, of the Aeronautical Division in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer of the Army.

Air Force Day came into being immediately after the signing of the National Security Act of 1947, although the status of the air element of the military was uncertain. Thus, although it was called Air Force Day, its first celebration was staged by the Army Air Forces and not by the U.S. Air Force.

Underlying the Air Force Day celebration was a need to increase "both official and public awareness of the priority of importance of air forces in any system of national security," according to Truman. "The great strategic fact of our generation is that the United States now possesses live frontiers — the frontiers of the air — and that the oceans are no longer sure ramparts against attack."

In his message to the nation on the first Air Force Day, Truman said, "I remind all of our citizens that the air power of the nation is essential to the preservation of our liberty, and that the continued development of the science of air transportation is vital to the trade and commerce of a peaceful world."

Air Force Day was last observed on Aug. 1, 1949.